

DRAFT - Blackstone River Watershed Action Plan

TOPIC: Water Quality

GOAL:

Clean and Plentiful Water. Fishable, Swimmable surface water bodies.

ISSUE I:

Much of the Blackstone River and its tributaries are impaired due to biodiversity impacts, pathogens, hypoxia, nutrients, ammonia (un-ionized), and metals (Cu, Pb).

Objective 1:

Restore impaired sections of the Blackstone River and its tributaries.

Strategy 1.1:

Complete the water quality characterization of the river and its tributaries and identify opportunities to abate pollution.

Activities:

- 1.1.1 Determine gaps in water quality data where additional monitoring and assessment are needed.
- 1.1.2 Explore sources of non-permitted dry weather discharges (non-CSO) to the river.
- 1.1.3 Map existing stormwater discharges, identifying and prioritizing discharges that need immediate attention.
- 1.1.4 Assist communities in development of septic system management plans.
- 1.1.5 Collaborate with Department of Transportation and local Public Works projects to incorporate retrofits for stormwater discharges.
- 1.1.6 Implement and utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) for controlling stormwater runoff.
- 1.1.7 Assess and control through effective BMPs stormwater flow and discharge from sand and gravel quarrying operations as well as roadways and parking facilities.
- 1.1.8 Improve stormwater basin management.
- 1.1.9 Ensure that wastewater facilities are operating properly.
- 1.1.10 Ensure that stormwater controls are properly installed at auto junkyards, autobody shops, and at other potential high impact commercial/industrial land uses along the river and its tributaries.
- 1.1.11 Continue CSO abatement efforts.
- 1.1.12 Develop bioassessments for the Blackstone River, Canal, and major tributaries.

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- 1.1.13 Implement the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) process for the Blackstone River and tributaries as soon as possible.
- 1.1.14 Revisit targeted RIPDES permitted discharges, and provide strong incentives for compliance through stepped up enforcement and compliance actions.
- 1.1.15 Inventory/sample abandoned, unused and/or impaired municipal/industrial water supply wells or intakes (raceways) where such wells or intakes (raceways) can act as conduits to contamination entering the watershed.
- 1.1.16 Obtain survey of minimum stream flow requirements needed for maintenance of healthy conditions along the Blackstone River and tributaries.
- 1.1.17 Assure proper closure of abandoned water supply and monitoring wells to limit the risk of contaminants entering into the aquifer from these structures. (Note: USGS or water well companies may be of assistance in identifying many large capacity wells through their inventory of wells)

Strategy 1.2:

Increase public awareness on the impact of human activity within the watershed and how they can assist in pollution reduction measures.

Activities:

- 1.2.1 Produce and distribute multi-lingual watershed awareness outreach materials, particularly emphasizing ways to reduce non-point source pollution.
- 1.2.2 Launch a watershed-wide anti-litter and watershed awareness television ad campaign.
- 1.2.3 Develop and erect watershed signs along major roadways, in concert with BRVNHHC, which has good design standards in place.
- 1.2.4 Provide outreach and voluntary compliance programs to the regulated community, targeting the potential high impact commercial/industrial land uses along the River and its tributaries.
- 1.2.5 Create a novice-friendly watershed map for residents and businesses located in the watershed.
- 1.2.6 Develop a wayside exhibit program in conjunction with the BRVNHHC to explain how a watershed works.
- 1.2.7 Coordinate existing environmental education programs across the watershed, and support new projects for watershed education.
- 1.2.8 Produce and distribute information about alternative advanced septic systems and septic system management to homeowners throughout the watershed.

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- 1.2.9 Support a River Education Program and river classroom aboard the Blackstone Valley Explorer.
- 1.2.10 Erect and maintain trash receptacles along the river and tributaries, particularly at the heads of trails and other access points.

Strategy 1.3

Protect and restore riparian buffer areas and wetlands throughout the Watershed.

Activities:

- 1.3.1 Pursue expansion of URI wetland restoration study into the Blackstone River Watershed.
- 1.3.2 Develop riparian buffer implementation plan for watershed.
- 1.3.3 Step up enforcement actions on violators of wetland and waste regulations.
- 1.3.4 Convene task force to explore alternative review procedures in order to ensure that re-development projects result in significant environmental improvements in areas that are currently degraded.
- 1.3.5 Develop State and local incident reporting and enforcement strategies to protect against unauthorized manipulating, tampering, or redirecting surface water flow through control structures, affecting flow velocity, quantity, or quality of water for the Blackstone River, Canal, and its tributaries.
- 1.3.6 Identify areas of stream bank erosion that are degrading water quality.
- 1.3.7 Obtain assistance from NRCS, DEM, and other applicable government agencies and NGO's (e.g. Trout Unlimited) to assess degree of stream bank degradation, and plan and perform necessary corrective action.

Strategy 1.4

Provide assistance to municipalities on stormwater issues, particularly Phase II.

Activities:

- 1.4.1 Provide technical and financial assistance for the creation of stormwater management plans.
- 1.4.2 Provide technical and financial, and/or grant writing assistance to communities to provide targeted action plans in areas of high impact or concern.

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- 1.4.3 Provide grant writing assistance for restoration and retrofit opportunities throughout the watershed.

Issue II:

Water use and availability has not been characterized in the watershed.

Objective 2:

Current and projected water use requirements are known, and adequate water supply is available.

Strategy 2.1:

Develop water use/availability characterization report for the watershed.

Activities:

- 2.1.1 Complete water use/availability report.
- 2.1.2 Develop water use management and conservation plans for each community.
- 2.1.3 Analyze use/availability report data alongside results from the Blackstone Build-Out Analysis in order to use these two tools most effectively.
- 2.1.4 Assist communities in implementing Source Water Protection Programs for all drinking water sources.
- 2.1.5 Incorporate water use management and source water protection measures into town comprehensive plans.

TOPIC: Public and Environmental Health

GOAL:

A healthy safe environment for all watershed residents.

ISSUE I:

Poor air and water quality poses a health risk in some communities of the watershed.

Objective 3:

Safe water and air quality throughout watershed.

Strategy 3.1:

Characterize air quality within problem areas of the watershed and identify opportunities to abate pollution.

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Activities:

- 3.1.1 Pursue funding opportunities for air quality monitoring.
- 3.1.2 Conduct Survey of businesses using Volatile Organic Compounds in problem areas.

Strategy 3.2:

Increase public awareness of known and assumed environmental health risks.

Activities:

- 3.2.1 Pursue funding for Do's and Don'ts program for watershed Communities within the Blackstone River Watershed.
- 3.2.2 Develop a multi-lingual public relations campaign to inform all residents in the watershed.
- 3.2.3 Expand outreach efforts regarding the impacts of lead to watershed residents.
- 3.2.4 Develop a wayside exhibit program in conjunction with the BRVNHC to explain how a watershed works.

ISSUE II:

The actual risk of fish consumption is not known in the watershed.

Objective 4:

Water bodies within the watershed have regular fish tissue sampling and steps taken to avoid the risk to the population.

Strategy 4.1:

Acquire data and information to support funding of fish tissue sampling in the watershed.

Activities:

- 4.1.1 Develop and implement fish consumption survey and outreach program in multiple languages.
- 4.1.2 Use data gathered to gain support for fish tissue sampling program (This is a statewide initiative).
- 4.1.3 Obtain sampling data, including measurements of heavy metals and other hazardous contamination in Blackstone fishes, in order to identify corrective action and issue public health advisories as needed. (Coordinate with RIDEM and Department of Health on this issue)

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Issue III:

Environmental Equity is a problem in the watershed's urban communities.

Objective 5:

Environmental policy and enforcement implemented fairly in urban as well as rural areas.

Strategy 5.1:

Establish Urban Environmental Task Force to address whether or not current environmental policy/regulations (Water Quality, Wetlands, and Waste Management) and implementation adequately and equitably deals with Urban Environmental Issues.

Activities:

- 5.1.1 Convene task force to assess current environmental policies and regulations in urban areas and to solicit public opinion on these issues.

TOPIC: Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

GOAL:

Protect and restore natural, cultural and recreational resources of importance to the communities within the watershed.

ISSUE I:

The Blackstone River Watershed faces increased development in its suburban and rural communities as well as increased redevelopment in its more urban areas. This development pressure results in the continued loss of important natural, cultural and recreational places.

Objective 6:

Focus activities, funding and resources to protect, preserve and restore important natural, cultural and recreational places.

Strategy 6.1:

Target land acquisition efforts to protect, preserve and restore critical natural habitat.

TOPIC: Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

Activities:

- 6.1.1 Expand criteria for Open Space Bond grants to reward sites included in Greenspace Plans and Watershed Action Plans and those sites that are physically connected to other important natural resources.
- 6.1.2 Assist municipalities and local land trusts in developing criteria and process for evaluating potential sites for open space protection.
- 6.1.3 Pursue enabling legislation to standardize bylaws for municipal land trusts within the state.
- 6.1.4 Explore potential for creation of a Blackstone Watershed Land Trust Alliance.

Strategy 6.2:

Assist each community in identifying and prioritizing important natural, cultural and recreational resources for protection.

Activities:

- 6.2.1 Develop Greenspace Implementation Strategies in each community.
- 6.2.2 Identify regional linkages between protected greenspaces (across state and municipal boundaries).
- 6.2.3 Identify all farms within the watershed communities, and prioritize these for preservation.
- 6.2.4 Plan and implement Heritage River site and building markers for the watershed.
- 6.2.5 Develop a Canal Protection and Management Plan.
- 6.2.6 Protect and promote “old stand” trees (example: the old growth Sycamores along the canal and Martin St. and in the area of the Kelly House) **Note: A number of these old growth (historic) trees are earmarked for destruction due to RIDOT bridge construction plans along Martin St.**

Strategy 6.3

Protect and restore natural habitats including riparian buffers, wetlands and anadromous fish runs throughout the watershed.

Activities:

- 6.3.1 Pursue expansion of URI wetland restoration study into the Blackstone River Watershed.
- 6.3.2 Secure funding for riparian restoration projects.
- 6.3.3 Develop riparian buffer restoration site identification and implementation plan for watershed.

TOPIC: Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

- 6.3.4 Step up enforcement actions on violators of wetland regulations.
- 6.3.5 Implement Blackstone River Watershed Interstate Gateway Project.
- 6.3.6 Support the implementation of the Blackstone River Anadromous Fish Restoration Action Plan to ensure passage for historical populations of anadromous fishes at all dams on the Blackstone River and its tributaries.
- 6.3.7 Develop an action plan for dam, spillway, and control structure maintenance including removal of seasonal debris, obstacles, and float material from dam sites and from where river or canal passage is impacted.
- 6.3.8 Conduct removal of large wood debris at Pratt Dam and other areas that pose an immediate threat to river flow.
- 6.3.9 Explore alternatives to improving stream flow and fish passage at the Blackstone Gorge.
- 6.3.10 Identify areas of stream bank erosion that are degrading water quality.
- 6.3.11 Obtain assistance from NRCS, DEM, and other applicable government agencies and NGO's (e.g. Trout Unlimited) to assess degree of stream bank degradation, and plan and perform necessary corrective action.

Strategy 6.4:

Develop the capacity of communities to preserve and reuse historic structures such as mills.

Activities:

- 6.4.1 Complete an inventory of endangered historic properties and buildings.
- 6.4.2 Consider environmental as well as historic assessments of mills and mill structures.
- 6.4.3 Work with local preservation groups to suggest potential reuse of historic structures.
- 6.4.4 Compile a database of examples where historic mills have been successfully reused while maintaining historic and cultural importance.
- 6.4.5 Work with businesses to ensure full utilization of mill buildings, addressing zoning, parking, and traffic issues.
- 6.4.6 Prioritize mill sites that are brownfields for remediation and redevelopment.

TOPIC: Natural, Cultural, and Recreational Resources

Strategy 6.5:

Construct additional segments of the bike trail for the Blackstone River Greenway along the River and connect to destinations.

Activities:

- 6.5.1 Continue efforts to construct Blackstone River Greenway and bike trail segments.
- 6.5.2 Work with Towns to move proposed Blackstone River Greenway and bike trail off road and along the river as much as possible.
- 6.5.3 Explore possibilities for linking bike path with other recreational opportunities (canoe access, hiking trails, etc.).
- 6.5.4 Work with Massachusetts to coordinate Bike Path development in a timely fashion. (This includes implementation of the Blackstone River Watershed Interstate Gateway Project).

Strategy 6.6:

Make river safer for navigation and recreational activities.

- 6.6.1 Construct safety lines along dams and floodways.
- 6.6.2 Explore liability issues with regards to recreational activities on the river.
- 6.6.3 Support the River Rescue Team for river rescue and recovery.
- 6.6.4 Purchase and maintain a rescue vessel for river rescue.
- 6.6.5 Provide outreach to the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Friends of the Blackstone, and other organizations involved in river recreation.
- 6.6.6 Improve signage at river access points and along hiking trails throughout the watershed.

Strategy 6.7:

Improve access to Blackstone River for navigation and recreational uses.

- 6.7.1 Implement river access plan titled Blackstone River Navigation and Transportation Plan.

Topic: Planning

GOAL:

Communities will have the capacity to effectively plan for growth in a way that minimizes negative impacts on the environment and community character, and contributes to a sustainable economy.

ISSUE I:

Some communities in the watershed lack the tools and resources needed to effectively plan for growth.

Objective 7:

Provide watershed communities with the information, tools, training and financial resources necessary to effectively plan for and manage growth in a way that reflects the community's needs and goals while minimizing impacts to the environment and community character.

Strategy 7.1:

Provide communities with specifics on how to incorporate watershed protection into their comprehensive plans.

Activities:

- 7.1.1 Involve Town Comprehensive Plan writers in all stages of Watershed Action Plan development, stressing ways in which town-specific comp plans and watershed-wide Action Plan connect and support each other.
- 7.1.2 Provide necessary technical assistance to local planning boards with regards to watershed protection planning as they revise and update local comprehensive plans.
- 7.1.3 Ensure that the strategies and concepts presented in the Watershed Action Plan are referenced and/or incorporated into local comprehensive plans.

Strategy 7.2:

Provide local boards and commissions with the appropriate tools and model ordinances that reflect community goals.

Activities:

- 7.2.1 Work with communities to develop greenspace plans.
- 7.2.2 Prepare next steps for the Blackstone River Build-Out Analysis.
- 7.2.3 Assist communities with grant submissions (open space, recreational, water quality etc.).

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- 7.2.4 Provide growth planning training and workshops for boards and commissions.
- 7.2.5 Develop population growth analysis which require provisions for residential expansion within the context of watershed issues.
- 7.2.6 Increase the capacity of local planners, boards and commissions by assisting them in acquiring hardware and software to take advantage of current technology, particularly the RIGIS database.
- 7.2.7 Assist communities with Greenway overlay zoning advice.

TOPIC: Remediation and Reuse of Contaminated Sites

GOAL:

Watershed communities will be free from unacceptable human health and ecological risks from exposure to hazardous substances and other potentially harmful agents.

ISSUE I:

Due in part to the rich industrial heritage of the watershed, several contaminated sites are present within the watershed which remain a risk to human and ecological health as well as being a barrier to economic development.

Objective 8:

Remediate and where appropriate reuse contaminated sites within the watershed.

Strategy 8.1:

Continue ongoing remediation efforts and increase efforts to identify and prioritize other sites.

Activities:

- 8.1.1 Identify and prioritize all brownfield sites for remediation.
- 8.1.2 Assist communities in remediation and marketing of brownfields.
- 8.1.3 Involve businesses in planning stages of brownfield redevelopment projects.
- 8.1.4 Prioritize mill sites that are brownfields for remediation and redevelopment.

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- 8.1.5 Work with communities to integrate remedial sites into larger open space and recreation efforts.
- 8.1.6 Assist towns with site-specific economic development planning, particularly waterfront revitalization plans.
- 8.1.7 Continue to monitor and take an active participatory role in the remediation of Peterson/Puritan, Inc., L&RR, Western Sand and Gravel and Stamina Mills Superfund Sites, CERCLIS and State listed sites within the watershed.

Strategy 8.2:

Clean-up solid waste and demolition debris disposal sites in the watershed (including all tire piles) and improve regulations and enforcement actions to prevent further illegal dumping.

Activities:

- 8.2.1 Use existing authority and appropriate enforcement tools to mandate clean-ups of private property.
- 8.2.2 Review and improve existing recycling programs for tires and batteries.
- 8.2.3 Consider signage, local policing, and rewarding incident reporting of disposal or dumping in targeted areas of high incidence.
- 8.2.4 Complete a list of improper or incongruent business uses along river and within watershed that may be reviewed for possible relocation.
- 8.2.5 Conduct an outreach and awareness program, including an effective ad campaign, to inform communities about the negative impacts of littering.
- 8.2.6 Support local volunteer cleanups within the watershed, aiding organizations in adopting an area for periodic clean-up.
- 8.2.7 Develop a local community patrol, enlisting community members to call in observations of inappropriate activity along the River and its tributaries to authorities.

TOPIC: Sustainable Economic Development

GOAL:

The Blackstone River once again will be the centerpiece of a thriving and sustainable economy that takes advantage of the river's many attributes while respecting the ecology of the river and its surrounding natural environments, as well as the cultural and historic heritage of the communities.

ISSUE I:

The communities in the Blackstone River Watershed have a proud history of mills and other river-based industry, and hold an important place in history as the "Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution." The Watershed has gone from a time when the river was the focus of economic strength to a time when the river has been all but forgotten in some communities.

Objective 9:

Build on the recent economic successes that have highlighted the river. Integrate environmental restoration and remediation opportunities with economic development projects. Focus on development projects that enhance environmental quality while preserving historic character and creating strong economic development.

Strategy 9.1:

Assist urban communities to develop and support development practices that enhance the environmental quality of the river while preserving the cultural and historic characteristics of the neighborhoods.

Activities:

- 9.1.1 Develop an urban design manual that clearly outlines methods communities can use to meet the objective.
- 9.1.2 Give incentives to developers who design projects that adhere to the recommended standards of the design manual.
- 9.1.3 Assist communities in marketing brownfields and other environmentally challenged sites.
- 9.1.4 Involve businesses in planning stages of brownfield redevelopment projects.
- 9.1.5 Develop ways to protect historic mills within the watershed and put them into productive reuse, including potentials for mixed-use development.
- 9.1.6 Help urban communities identify economic reinvestment opportunities.

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- 9.1.7 Support the Blackstone River Education and Scientific Research Center at the Central Falls Landing.
- 9.1.8 Assist towns with site-specific economic development planning.
- 9.1.9 Promote reuse of formerly developed properties over virgin lands through tax cuts or other incentives.
- 9.1.10 Create partnerships with local and regional economic organizations to support sustainable economic growth.
- 9.1.11 Assist communities in incorporating recreational and greenspace areas into growth plans, particularly at the subdivision approval stage.

Strategy 9.2:

Assist rural communities in sustaining existing farmlands and forests that preserve the natural and cultural landscape while maintaining its economic viability.

Activities:

- 9.2.1 Identify all farmland within watershed communities, and prioritize these for protection.
- 9.2.2 Explore creative ways for communities to support small farmers and farm-related activities.
- 9.2.3 Provide farmers with improved marketing techniques for farm products and farmer's markets.
- 9.2.4 Produce and distribute information on alternative forest uses.
- 9.2.5 Provide workshop series for land owners that assists them in identifying techniques for sustainable economic use of forestland.

TOPIC: Flood Protection and Dam Repair/Removal

GOAL:

All necessary dams are safe and flood prone areas addressed. Dam removal is carried out where ever it can be done to alleviate flooding, restore natural in-stream habitat, and improve recreational opportunities.

ISSUE I:

Many dams in the watershed are in need of inspections and/or repairs to improve safety and function.

Objective 10:

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Develop a long-range dam repair and removal plan for the purpose of dam safety, flood control, habitat restoration, and recreation.

Strategy 10.1:

Complete a dam characterization for all Blackstone Watershed Dams. Make recommendations for repair or removal.

Activities:

- 10.1.1 Identify and pursue grant opportunities to complete a dam characterization report and make recommendations for removal or repair.
- 10.1.2 Identify funding opportunities for dam projects.
- 10.1.3 Create a river-long Dam Safety Program as developed by the Blackstone River Safety Committee.
- 10.1.4 Provide State financial and technical planning and assistance for dam, impoundment, spillway and control structure repairs, improvements and maintenance targeting mainstream and Canal structures as a priority.
- 10.1.5 Provide State and local financial and technical planning and assistance for dam, impoundment, spillway and control structure signage and appropriate markings in order to provide safe navigation and potage around such structures.

ISSUE II:

Excessive damming along the River has had negative impacts on anadromous fish runs and stream flow.

Objective 11:

Adequate fish passage and stream flow along Blackstone River and major tributaries.

Strategy 11.1:

Remove barriers to fish passage and stream flow.

Activities:

- 11.1.1 Support the implementation of the Blackstone River Anadromous Fish Restoration Action Plan to ensure passage for historical populations of anadromous fishes at all dams on the Blackstone River and its tributaries.
- 11.1.2 Develop an action plan for dam, spillway, and control structure maintenance including removal of seasonal debris, obstacles, and float material from dam sites and from where river or canal passage is impacted.
- 11.1.3 Conduct removal of large wood debris at Pratt Dam and other areas that pose an immediate threat to river flow.

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11.1.4 Explore alternatives to improving stream flow and fish passage at the Blackstone Gorge.

ISSUE III:

Flooding is a problem in certain areas of the watershed.

Objective 12:

Identify and correct flooding problems in the watershed.

Strategy 12.1:

Protect and restore natural drainage and flood control systems (i.e. wetland and riparian restorations, stream and river reclamation and maintenance, daylighting) in the watershed.

TOPIC: Flood Protection and Dam Repair/Removal

Activities:

- 12.1.1 Complete a flood study of the river and its tributaries.
- 12.1.2 Begin new restoration projects and continue existing riparian and wetland restorations for habitat and flood storage.
- 12.1.3 Implement Blackstone River Watershed Interstate Gateway Project.

TOPIC: Watershed Organization Capacity

GOAL:

The Blackstone River Watershed Council is a thriving group with a broad constituency and regular funding to support the staffing and administrative needs, now and into the future. The Council and the issues they are promoting are recognized throughout the watershed.

Issue I:

The Blackstone River Watershed Council is a young but strong community-based organization working to revitalize the environment, historical and economic resources of the watershed. Currently they are relying on competitive grants to fund personnel, administrative and outreach cost. This takes a great deal of time and efforts away from their mission and outreach efforts.

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Objective 13:

Provide the Blackstone River Watershed Council with the sustained financial capacity to effectively operate and achieve their goals.

Strategy 13.1:

Seek legislative funding for designated Watershed Councils.

Activities:

- 13.1.1 Submit application for Blackstone River Watershed designation by the Rivers Council.
- 13.1.2 Work with state legislators and the Rivers Council to fund designated watershed councils. Include watershed organizations in state and federal grant opportunities.
- 13.1.3 Develop consistent foundation funding vehicle for watershed organizations.
- 13.1.4 Develop a membership program for the Blackstone Valley Watershed Council to raise funds for educational programs and watershed cleanups.
- 13.1.5 Work with local communities to support the Watershed Council with a contribution each year.

Objective 14:

Develop and implement consistent watershed outreach effort.

Strategy 14.1

Provide watershed outreach materials and funding to the council to build constituency and support for their goals.

Activities:

- 14.1.1 Include outreach components to grant projects within the watershed.
- 14.1.2 Provide funding for printing and design of outreach materials.
- 14.1.3 Design and erect signage throughout the watershed for streams and other water bodies that bring attention to the watershed.
- 14.1.4 Support a River Education Program and river classroom aboard the Blackstone Valley Explorer.
- 14.1.5 Coordinate existing environmental education programs across the watershed, and support new projects for watershed education.

Issue II:

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The Blackstone River Watershed includes communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. In order to be most effective, watershed groups must actively coordinate and communicate efforts across state boundaries.

Objective 15:

Creative interstate watershed partnerships that link existing human, technical, and financial resources across Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Strategy 15.1

Build a working relationship with Massachusetts-based watershed groups, with an aim towards developing a comprehensive watershed approach and common Watershed Action Plan.

Activities:

- 15.1.1 Review activities, work plans, and projects of the Massachusetts Blackstone River Watershed Association.
- 15.1.2 Form interstate Watershed Council, comprised of stakeholders from both states.
- 15.1.3 Develop an interstate Watershed Action Plan to guide watershed management across state boundaries.
- 15.1.4 Make relevant information regarding Rhode Island Blackstone Watershed Organization activities accessible to the Massachusetts Watershed Association.
- 15.1.5 Expand mailing list and e-mail list to include Massachusetts stakeholders, and distribute notices of meetings and events to Massachusetts watershed communities.

Strategy 15.2

Coordinate watershed projects with Massachusetts in order to increase efficiency and improve working relationships.

Activities:

- 15.2.1 Implement the Blackstone River Watershed Interstate Gateway Project.
- 15.2.2 Identify regional linkages between protected greenspaces across state boundaries, including contiguous riparian habitat.
- 15.2.3 Collaborate on watershed project grants to increase accessibility to competitive funds.
- 15.2.4 Coordinate Blackstone River Greenway development, linking Bike Way segments on the state border as soon as possible.

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Topic: Transportation

GOAL:

An integrated network of accessible and environmentally responsible modes of transportation operates throughout the watershed.

ISSUE I:

Current transportation projects are not well coordinated with environmental and restoration efforts.

Objective 16:

Stakeholders identify opportunities for integrating environmental enhancement and restoration projects with transportation projects.

Strategy 16.1:

Coordinate public works projects with enhancement and restoration efforts.

Activities:

- 16.1.1 Continue current design remediation efforts at sites with bike path construction, particularly the Blackstone River Watershed Interstate gateway Project.
- 16.1.2 Publicize road design schedule to allow for coordination with other local projects and potential restoration efforts.
- 16.1.3 Continue efforts to construct Blackstone River Greenway and bike path segments along the River.
- 16.1.4 Protect and promote “old stand” trees (example: the old growth Sycamores along the canal and Martin St. and in the area of the Kelly House) Note: A number of these old growth (historic) trees are earmarked for destruction due to RIDOT bridge construction plans along Martin St.

ISSUE II:

Public transportation does not adequately address resident's needs.

Objective 17:

Transportation needs of the watershed community are understood and efforts to address those needs are underway.

Strategy 17.1:

Evaluate current transportation options.

Topic: Transportation

Activities:

- 17.1.1 Conduct a needs analysis of the transportation needs in watershed communities, and explore potential for alternative modes of transportation.
- 17.1.2 Improve access to public transportation.
- 17.1.3 Implement river access plan titled Blackstone River Navigation and Transportation Plan.

ISSUE III:

Traffic Congestion has a negative impact on air quality and economic development in the area

Objective 18:

Traffic congestion problems are eliminated and new linkages have been established between communities.

Strategy 18.1:

Engage in traffic calming and feasibility studies to address key transportation related issues.

Activities:

- 18.1.1 Conduct traffic calming study along Martin St. in Cumberland where the bikeway crosses the street along the River .
- 18.1.2 Work with local landowners to develop parking, easements and access sites to /from the bikeway and locations along the River.